2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

sionally chance upon windfalls, but their wealth is of no use to them, for they can never retire, even in the extremest age. Like the pagoda slaves they have their headquarters in Pagān, and some of them are vehemently suspected of being runaway parakyuns from other parts of the country. But the advance in public estimation is of the slightest possible character. Among the sellers of nantagôn and other pagoda essentials, at the shrines of Rangoon, Prome, and Pegu, are here and there a few tadaungsa, tired of their wandering life; yet, notwithstanding the ill-favour with which they are regarded, they are never stinted for food.

Lepers and others afflicted with loathsome diseases, deformed and mutilated persons, are regarded more with pity than with aversion, but they are not the less outcasts, and must live in villages by themselves, or with the tadaungsa and parakyun if indeed they do not scorn to do so. They usually line the pagoda steps on a duty or feast day, and receive abundant alms, every third or fourth worshipper dropping a handful of rice or a copper coin into the basket or platter laid before them. The dislike to maimed people is very singular, and led to curious incidents in the first and second Burmese wars. The wounded men brought into the field hospitals refused to have arms or legs amputated to save their lives, and it is a matter of not unfrequent occurrence even now, in the hospitals, for a man to tear off the bandages wrapped round the stump, that he may not survive his misfortune and become a shame to his family. In some parts of the province the taint, or even the suspicion of leprosy in a family, becomes a fertile source of villainy. If the suspected person or the head of the house be at all well-to-do, heavy sums are extorted by the headman of the place in return for permission to stay on in the village, and sometimes informers make a good thing in demanding hush-money. But no amount of payments could save a man badly affected with the disease from being driven out of the town. Even in large towns the aversion is equally strong, and unless the leper is a rich man he has to live in prescribed quarters among the outcasts already mentioned. Equally despised are all those who have anything to do with funerals, either in making the

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

564 coffin or digging the grave. This occupation has therefore
● 767 fallen almost exclusively into the hands of the old para-kyun, and helps to keep alive the ancient feeling. It must be allowed that the ways of the sandalās do not in any way tend to conciliate the multitude.

564 Finally there were the pagwet, the letyataung, or thaing-
681 gyaing, the constables, jailers, executioners, lictors, mostly
625 confined to the neighbourhood of the native kingdom Mandalay. These merited all the obloquy that could be cast on them, but their position of quasi-authority made them more secretly hated than openly flouted. They were never allowed to enter a free man's house, even in the exercise of their office; nor could they go within the walls of the palace stockade, but many a citizen smarted under the blows of the lictor's thaing, when a great man came round a corner suddenly, and the letyataung saw a chance for a back-hander with his fasces; and it was far too easy a matter for a man to get into jail in Mandalay to make it a wise proceeding to rail at the pagwet. It was an unlovely custom in Upper Burma which made the executioner both constable and jailer, and condemned him to live on his wits. The natural result was that he lived on the prisoners, and extorted the last pice out of his victim with threats of violence, or actual torture. Pagwet means a circle on the cheek, and this ring on the face implied that its bearer had been condemned for a capital crime, and was respited to become executioner. Others had devices descriptive of their offence tattooed on the chest, as luthat (murderer), thukho (thief), damya (dacoit or highway robber). An execution in Mandalay was a horrid sight. The "spotted man" danced round his victim, made feints with his sword and burst into fits of wild laughter or yells, to shake the doomed man's nerves. It must be admitted that the spectators were very little better. A skilful blow which just slit the skin and drew blood met
[766] with an approving shout. The pagwet, like other outcasts, was buried like carrion when he died, or perhaps was simply thrown out with the town offal.

563 How does all this agree with the theory of Buddhism,
775 that there is equality for all, and that the poorest man can raise himself to sublimest heights after death? The king